

PEOPLE & THINGS

I FANCY there is one regular reader of THE SUNDAY TIMES who, when his copy reaches him around lunchtime today, will not, as is his invariable custom, open the paper at this page and proceed no farther until he has thoroughly digested the article on bridge of my distinguished neighbour, Mr. Kenneth Konstam.

Even for the greatest author there are few more intoxicating moments than the first sight of his manuscript in print and, just for today, I am pretty certain that Page 3 will have to give precedence to Page 6 at the Villa Mauresque, St. Jean Cap Ferrat, A.M.

The Dog's Army

AFTER admiring the R.A.F. police dogs at the Royal Tournament I despatched a spy to the Royal Army Veterinary Corps Training Centre at Melton Mowbray to steal its secrets.

Lieut.-Colonel John Clabby, the Commandant, was delighted to give them away. He is short of suitable dogs and will welcome any Alsatian who has shown its mettle by sinking its teeth in the postman's calf.

Staff-Sergeant Hemming, who has been training dogs for twenty-seven years and is regarded by the 300 he handles every year as a sort of super-Alsatian, says that guard-training lasts three months during which are taught the basic words of command: "Heel!" "Down!" "Sit!" "Come!" "Stay!" "Attack!" and "Leave!" (the least obeyed).

When the dog is trained he spends two weeks with the young volunteer soldier who will be his "handler" throughout his working life.

Plutonic!

HEMMING finds that all uncontrollably ferocious dogs have been misunderstood. Often his sympathetic treatment is so effective that the reformed dog cannot be induced to attack anyone, which is a shame as he is only interested in dogs with "temperament," (i.e., really keen on biting people). He never punishes dogs but trains them by a system of rewards and constant reminders.

Mine detection is done by cross-breeds or Labradors under 40 pounds in weight so that they will not detonate mines which are set at 60-70 pounds. The dogs are trained first to find food, and then food accompanied by metal, wood or glass, which they eventually detect (cf. Pavlov) without the food.

"Tracking" is done mostly by bloodhounds, who seem to have degenerated sadly since Baskerville days. Few have "temperament," and they are lazy and get bored, with the exception of Duff,

By ATTICUS

a dusky giant with a melodious baritone bark, who is a terror.

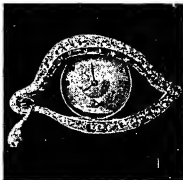
R.A.V.C. trained dogs are now in all our theatres of war and my spy returned with a healthy respect for the new Army's best friend and his tutor.

Forshaw and Hyde

IT might seem unlikely for THE SUNDAY TIMES to be represented at Le Mans by the Managing Director of The Book Society, but in fact Mr. Aubrey Forshaw is equally at home in Bloomsbury and at Silverstone.

When he leaves the Ivory (or at any rate best-quality bone) tower which houses The Book Society, The Reprint Society and Pan Books, all of which he directs, he descends to the pit of the sports car and the "hot-rod" where talk, instead of being of "existentialism," "father-figures," the "ego" and the "id," is of "bottom-cogs," "gear-bags" and "running out of road."

I hope on another page Mr. Forshaw has remembered which of him is reporting on the race.



A Dali Jewel

SALVADOR DALI adds greatly to the gaiety of nations and it is only a pity that of the wit and beauty of his inventive genius it is too often the former that predominates.

But now that he has turned his attention to Jewellery I believe we are witnessing the birth of a Fabergé. His recent exhibition in Rome, from which I illustrate the "liquefied watch" he designed in gold and diamonds for the Cathedral Foundation, contained creations of rare loveliness.

A Disembellishment

I BELIEVE that if a fable is attractive enough it should be put out of bounds to the scholar, and I thus regret that Sir George Bell, Garter King of Arms, doubts the story of Joan the Fair Maid of Kent, who lost her garter while dancing with her cousin Edward III and of his "Hon! soit qui mal y pense" to the smirking courtiers as he retrieved it.

This is the only quarrel I have with the beautifully-illustrated Pitkin Pictorial in which Sir George describes the Chapel and the Order Sir Winston will be receiving tomorrow. But if it was not Joan's garter, why, since men did not wear them in those days, should a lady's garter have been chosen for a symbol of the "most Honourable Order and Amiable Company of St. George"?

The Military Bird

ATTENTIVE readers of this column will be interested in one of the final honours conferred upon Major-General Shoosmith

before he relinquishes this week his appointment as Deputy Chief of Staff to the U.N. Command in Korea.

His interest inflamed (I understand) by my recent description of the honourable sport of cormorant fishing, General Shoosmith spent last week-end at Gifu where aboard a small barge he took an active part in the fishing, drank his saké and ate his raw fish like an old hand and exploded spectacular fireworks with the aplomb of a veteran gunnery officer.

As a result of his very "sincere" department, Japan's champion fishing cormorant, a sharp-beaked bird with a cold eye and a voracious appetite, has been re-christened Shoosmith-San by Mr. Yamashita, head cormorant-fisherman of Gifu.

Scribner's Envoy

MR. DAVE RANDALL, who is the Rare Book Department of Scribner's, is over here in search of literary treasures for his American clients and I had lunch with him the other day, together with Mr. Percy Muir of Elkin Mathews, that mandarin of the antiquarian book world.

They are both born raconteurs and I could fill my whole column with their stories of the splendours and miseries of their profession, but I will select Mr. Randall's cautionary tale of the owner of one of the thirteen copies of the American Declaration of Independence who stubbornly refused Mr. Randall's blandishments until one Friday he telephoned out of the blue and said he had changed his mind.

The Careful Trader

ON the Saturday Mrs. Randall drove her triumphant husband out to Greenwich, Connecticut. In his library the old gentleman handed them a beautiful morocco slip case and Mr. Randall presented him with the majestic personal cheque of Mr. Scribner. The old gentleman brusquely rejected it.

"That cheque's not certified," he said. "That's no way to do business, Mr. Randall." "But it's not mine, it's Mr. Scribner's personal cheque." "Can't help that. And what were you intending to do with my property until Monday?" "I was going to take it back to my house." "Might easily burn down." "Well it hasn't for one hundred and fifty years," said Mr. Randall getting rather impatient. "Young man, that won't stop it burning down tomorrow. I will bring the document up in the train on Monday—insured all the way—and bring it to your office and you will then hand me a certified cheque."

"Pernickety old fool," said Mr. Randall to his wife as they drove disconsolately away.

On Monday the happiest old man in America handed over the Broadsheet and took the cheque. He had just been told that on Sunday Mr. Randall's house was burned to the ground.

The Stout of Heart

A MAIDEN LADY aged sixty-five who recently returned to Kenya wrote to her sister complaining about Mau Mau creeping through the garden at night. Her family were worried and wrote telling her to come home. A friend of mine has seen her reply: "Fiddlesticks! Send by return of post a manual on ju-jitsu."